



News Release

Carol Schmidt

416 Culbertson Hall

P.O. Box 172220

Bozeman, MT 59717-0222

Tel: (406) 994-1966

Fax: (406) 994-4102

cschmidt@montana.edu

<http://www.montana.edu/cpa/news>

Nov. 6 performance of 'Romeo and Juliet' benefits Shakespeare in the Schools

10/14/09 Contact: Kathy Jahnke (406) 994-3901, kjahnke@montana.edu
L, This Week, Big Timber, MSU Today

Summary: Montana Shakespeare in the Schools sets benefit performance of "Romeo and Juliet" Nov. 6

Bozeman –Montana Shakespeare in the Schools, an educational outreach program of Montana Shakespeare in the Parks, will present a special public performance of "Romeo and Juliet" on Friday, Nov. 6, in Montana State University's Black Box Theater. Named "The Elise Event" in honor of patron Elise Donohue, all proceeds will benefit Shakespeare in the Schools' annual tour.

The event will begin at 6:30 p.m. with beverages served in the Black Box Theater, located at 11th and Grant. The performance of "Romeo and Juliet" will begin at 7 p.m. followed by a catered reception.

Joel Jahnke, an MSU professor who serves as artistic director for both Shakespeare in the Parks and Shakespeare in the Schools, said "Romeo and Juliet" is arguably the most popular and most adapted of Shakespeare's plays.

"This production has been specifically directed from the teenager's point of view, which makes it very exciting and we think will speak directly to our high school audiences," Jahnke said.

The production was directed by William Brown, an award-winning director from Chicago and associate artistic director of Montana Shakespeare in the Parks.

Following The Elise Event performance, the audience will meet Jahnke as well as the actors and designers for a behind-the-scenes discussion and catered wine reception.

Jahnke explained that Donohue will underwrite the benefit, allowing 100 percent of the proceeds from the event to go directly to fund the Shakespeare in the Schools' outreach efforts.

"In order to continue to serve the schools of Montana in the current economic climate, MSIP must continue to maintain affordable sponsorship fees," Jahnke said. "Schools are able to pay only 25 percent of the actual costs of the tour. With corporate sponsors and foundations less able to make up the difference, we rely more than ever on our individual donors to keep this tour traveling to under-served schools."

Now in its eighth year, the inspiration for The Elise Event began in the summer of 2001 when a private performance of Shakespeare in the Schools was offered as an auction item at the company's annual summer benefit. Donohue, a Clyde Park rancher and champion of the arts, was the high bidder. When called to ask what she would like to do with the performance, she said that she wanted to create an opportunity for people to experience firsthand what Shakespeare in the Schools was bringing to the students of Montana.

Seating for the event is limited. Tickets for the play and reception are \$25 and are available at First Interstate Bank in the Strand Union Building, Borders, Cactus Records, and by calling the Montana Shakespeare in the Parks office at 994-3901. For more information about Montana Shakespeare in the Parks or Montana Shakespeare in the Schools, see: www.montana.edu/shakespeare .

Montana Shakespeare in the Schools is the nationally recognized educational outreach program of Montana Shakespeare in the Parks. Both are in residence at MSU's College of Arts and Architecture. Shakespeare in the Schools, now in its 17th season, launched its 50-school tour in early October. The tour will run through mid-December, serving an estimated 15,000 students throughout Montana and northern Wyoming.

-kj/cs-